



Creating Opportunity in Higher Education



WASHINGTON

STATE

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Implementation of the 2000 Master Plan for Higher Education

Background

Every four years, as required by state law, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) prepares a 10-year master plan, which assesses the state's higher education needs and recommends enrollments and other policies to meet those needs.

The 2000 Master Plan for Higher Education reaffirmed the Board's longstanding commitment to increasing opportunities for citizens to go to college and keeping higher education affordable for students and families. In addition, it called for placing the needs of learners first and presented strategies for meeting the growing demand for higher education through 2010. The Legislature adopted the Master Plan during the 2000 legislative session and the Board has begun work on its implementation.

Continuing Commitments

In its 2000 Master Plan, the Board also reaffirmed the state's longstanding commitment to increasing higher education opportunity.

1. Increase College Opportunity

The Board is requesting \$53.9 million for 6,594 new full-time enrollments in 2001-2003, including enrollments earmarked for high-demand programs such as information technology, teacher training and health care.

1. Keep Public Higher Education Affordable

The Board is urging the Legislature to approve legislation in 2001 that links future increases in tuition at public colleges and universities to the rolling three-year average change in the state's per capita personal income (PCPI). Based on current estimates of PCPI, annual tuition could increase up to a maximum of 4.9 percent in 2001-2002 and 3.9 percent in 2002-2003. Colleges and universities would have the flexibility to offer lower tuition in response to local conditions and needs.

2. Provide Financial Aid to Needy Students

The Board is requesting a \$53.8 million increase in financial aid in 2001-2003 to help more low- and middle-income students and their families pay for college. The boost will allow the state to: 1) offer State Need Grants to 3,500 more low-income students and reduce by 50 percent the gap between grants and tuition and fees, 2) help 2,000 more students earn money for school through State Work Study and serve all students at slightly higher levels, and 3) fully fund awards for all Washington Promise Scholarship recipients.

New Priorities

1. Focus on Student Learning

As K-12 education adopts new ways to measure student learning, so too must the higher education system. The state should identify the skills and knowledge associated with statewide associate transfer degrees and baccalaureate degrees.

917 Lakeridge Way SW
P.O. Box 43430
Olympia, WA 98504-3430
Phone: (360) 753-7800
Fax: (360) 753-7808
Email: info@hecb.wa.gov
www.hecb.wa.gov

- The Board is requesting \$200,000 in 2001-2003 for a pilot project at three campuses to identify the skills and learning outcomes needed for college graduation in the three specific degree programs.
- During the 1999-2000 academic year, an inter-institutional planning group, including HECB and Council of Presidents representatives, worked to develop three student learning performance measures:
 - 1) writing, 2) information/technology literacy, and 3) quantitative reasoning.
- The Board is recommending that the Legislature and Governor give priority to 2001-2003 Fund for Innovation projects that support these three student learning performance measures.

2. Link K-12 Achievement to Higher Education Opportunity

The state should seek incentives to encourage students to pursue academic excellence in K-12 education and continue on to college.

- The Board is urging the Legislature to establish the Washington Promise Scholarship in law in 2001 to reward students from low- and middle-income families who excel academically in high school.
- The Board also is requesting \$461,000 in 2001-2003 to expand the competency-based admissions project from four to 12 high schools and to examine the feasibility of expanding the model to all 396 high schools statewide. The project brings together high school and college faculty to discuss what students should know and be able to do to be admitted to college.

The Board is a partner in the College Awareness Project, a collaborative initiative of the K-12, community and technical college and baccalaureate sectors to reach out to prospective students from families and groups that have not historically participated fully in higher education.

3. Empower Higher Education Consumers

The state should give citizens better tools to help navigate and access the higher education system.

- The Board is requesting \$1.3 million in 2001-2003 to: 1) develop a one-stop, interactive Web portal with information about higher education, including financial aid, admissions, transfers, and on-line education opportunities, and 2) continue the Jefferson County pilot project as a model rural outreach effort.
- The Board is also requesting \$530,000 in 2001-2003 to initiate a statewide Course Applicability System, which will allow students to quickly identify on-line which courses at two-year colleges will transfer to four-year public colleges and universities.

4. Use E-learning to Enhance Education Opportunities

The Board recommends that the average full-time student receive 1.5 lecture contact hours per week through e-learning by 2010.

- The Board has included its e-learning goal in its capital budget planning guidelines and will be working with the Office of Financial Management and institutions to measure the use of e-learning as an alternative to seat-based instruction.
- The Board has completed a faculty and staff e-learning needs assessment and inventory of existing training efforts and has shared the results with institutions to help with training initiatives.

5. Help Colleges and Universities Meet Student Needs

The state should eliminate unnecessary barriers to student progress and student program demand. In addition, it should offer incentives to promote productivity, partnerships and full use of facilities.

- The Board's 2001-2003 budget guidelines contain incentives for productivity, partnerships and full use of facilities.
- Board staff have met with stakeholders to identify barriers to student learning and institutional competitiveness and will reconvene to consider future action.